

Twelve Feet Deep

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Twelve Feet Deep

by [hendollana](#)

Summary

Clay keeps bringing home guys that look like George. Nick pretends not to notice.

Notes

helloooo, first and foremost if you know me as the author of [Current Location](#) i just wanna say i am alive and well and do plan on finishing when i'm home from uni over christmas sorry for going awol :)

anyway here's just a wee thing i wrote today to try and get back in the swing of fic writing and not academic writing.

as usual, please don't send or mention this to george or dream or anyone associated with them.

(title taken from Twelve Feet Deep by The Front Bottoms)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

The first time Nick is willing to accept it as a coincidence, a weird, kind of creepy coincidence. But a coincidence nonetheless.

So what if the boy Clay is lazily waving bye to from their front door has cropped brown hair and is

shorter than Clay and has a kind of twinkly look to him. It's definitely just a coincidence that he could be George's brother, even if Nick is almost ninety nine percent sure that Clay has been pining for their mutual British friend for what feels like *years* , it probably has nothing to do with that.

That's why, when Clay closes the door and turns with a self-satisfied smirk firmly on his face, Nick decides to say absolutely nothing about the George lookalike situation.

Instead he gives his roommate a thumbs up, smiling a little when Clay laughs, and then retreats back into his room to definitely not think over the state of affairs. It's none of his business, and absolutely *not* something Nick should be meddling in.

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The second time, Nick finds it a bit harder to not mention the fact that Clay has seemed to have been able to find George's long lost twin, let alone convince him to come back to their flat.

Nick witnesses them coming into the apartment this time, and barely manages to stop a fake gagging sound when his poor eyes have to watch his best friend push *another* small, brown haired skinny boy into the wall of *their* hallway and kiss him. Because, really, it's their shared space and Nick isn't exactly out here bringing girls back and making Clay watch.

He does roll his eyes when Clay catches him staring as he tugs the stranger into his room and gives Nick a salute.

So okay, Nick still isn't going to mention the fact that all the guys Clay is sleeping with lately look scarily like George, but he *is* going to mention the fact that Clay is bringing them back to their apartment without even asking. Because that's just rude. For now though, he's going to start on his university work like the good student he is and put on his headphones with the volume at the highest setting, just in case.

It's probably been about two hours when Nick feels one of his earphones being tugged out of his ear and clanging to the wooden table. He drags his eyes away from the lines of code he'd been near crying over to see Clay stood in front of him, grey sweatpants swung low on his hips and no shirt on. As if Nick's eyes hadn't already been violated enough today.

Nick raises an eyebrow, "Your latest fling gone then?"

Clay scoffs and drops down backwards to sit on their sofa, "Yeah, he just left." And then he gives Nick an apologetic gaze, "Look, sorry for not shooting you a text first to let you know I was bringing someone round, it was just quite last minute."

Nick nods, because really he doesn't care *that* much, sure they both usually let the other know if they're bringing anyone home but Nick gets that Clay's probably going through it with the whole George thing right now, not that Nick's going to mention that.

"It's fine, don't worry," Nick smiles, giving Clay a thoughtful look, "Two guys in as many weeks though, I'm impressed."

Clay laughs, head thrown back, "Are you *slut* shaming me, Nick?"

The younger barks a laugh back, "No, *no* , if anything I'm jealous," Nick muses, "I can barely even get a girl from Tinder to go get coffee with me."

Clay smiles sheepishly, his long fingers twirling his phone around in his hand, looking sort of embarrassed as he speaks, "Grindr kind of serves a different purpose though."

Nick snorts, because yeah, he's definitely heard his gay friends make jokes about how Grindr is absolutely *not* a dating app. At least that makes sense on how Clay is managing to fine pick all the queer men in the area who look scarily similar to George.

"Fair enough," Nick replies, watching Clay play with his phone and looking way too moody for someone who just got laid, "Any reason why you're doing this or?"

Clay raises an eyebrow, as if wondering why on earth he needs to explain to Nick why he wants a shag, it's just Nick figured if *he* wasn't going to mention the George doppelganger thing then maybe Clay would do it himself.

Nick figured wrong, it seems, as Clay smiles back and says, "I believe the young people call it a hoe phase."

Nick laughs, hoping it doesn't fall too flat. If that's what Clay wants to call it, sure, but Nick had lied to himself when he said he wasn't going to dig into Clay's pining for George if his and Darryl's discord chats are anything to go by.

What can Nick say, he's invested in his best friend's love life, because really, who isn't?

"Anyway," Clay says, clearing his throat as he stands, "Sorry again, I'm just gonna, go shower."

And yeah, that sad, sullen look is *not* how his flatmate would usually act after a pull.

"Are you still going to join me and George on the Minecraft server later?"

Nick pretends to not notice the way Clay's steps falter when George's name is mentioned, the same way he's pretended to not notice Clay staring at George when they all go out together, or the way Clay always holds the door for the British one, or the way Clay bristles with anger whenever George mentions a guy he's speaking to. Nick has practically aced the pretending by this point.

"Uh, I'm not sure." Clay mumbles, eyes not quite reaching Nick's. And, oh dear, this is *bad*. Clay doesn't even want to speak to George, maybe Nick needs to do something about this sooner than later.

"Please?" Nick near begs, and then pulls out the big cards, "George told me earlier he was really looking forward to it, you know he misses you when he's visiting home for longer than a few days."

Maybe it's cruel of Nick to mention the Brit, but it's not even a *lie*. George had told Nick earlier that he misses seeing them, he's been back in London for two weeks seeing his family which also fuels Nick's George replacement theory for Clay because usually the oldest of the three would be round at their apartment at least three days out of seven.

Clay's green eyes soften at the mention of George, and Nick decides he doesn't need anymore evidence to add to the 'Clay is in love with George. Holy Shit.' word document that him and Darryl have steadily been adding to the last two weeks.

"Fine, but only because I need to make sure my dogs are still alive."

Nick rolls his eyes and mumbles a, yeah, yeah, as Clay sulks into the bathroom.

Yeah, so Nick really needs to do something about this pining (mutual? He's not sure, he'll have to ask Darryl if he thinks George has a thing for Clay.) before Clay falls into a hopeless pit of despair.

Next week though, when George is back.

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The third time, Nick *does* say something. Mostly only because George is right there to witness it.

They're - him, Clay, George and Darryl -, sitting in their favourite bar (Nick takes the time to praise the creator of fake ID's) all surrounding a sticky table covered in empty glasses.

Nick's on just the right side of tipsy, lips a little fuzzy and everything his friends say seems ten times funnier than usual. George looks exhausted and sad, which fair enough, his flight from England had only gotten in five hours prior, and he's been nursing the same beer since they first ordered over an hour ago. Darryl's doing most of the talking for George, asking how his family are and if London is still as rainy as usual and then doing his best to work with the one word answers and shrugs George is replying with.

And Clay, well, Clay has been eying up a five foot something, brown haired, slim guy for the past hour and being absolutely oblivious to the sad looks George has been giving him.

This would be enough proof of the pining being requited for Nick, even if George hadn't called him yesterday *crying* asking if Clay had a boyfriend because Wilbur had told George that he'd seen Clay with one of George's lookalikes.

This, Nick had decided, meant it was now his civic duty to get George and Clay together.

This is also probably why Nick opens his mouth and speaks a full on lie, "Clay, bro," Nick gives a small wave as the older drags his eyes away from the stranger leaning against the bar to his friends, "I wouldn't bother, he's dating my friend Katie."

He's not. Well, he might be, Nick thinks, it's just that Nick has absolutely no way to prove if this guy is or isn't dating a girl named Katie because he has no idea who he is. Still, it's a harmless white lie for the sake of his friends.

"Oh," Clay says, dropping his head onto his hand and leaning on the table, "Oh well."

Nick gives Clay a smile and turns to give George a knowing look, near *begging* him to make a move on the American. George just gives a pitiful smile back.

**

It sucks, being in love with your best friend.

It sucks and it's cliché and George *hates* it with every atom in his stupid body. But how could he not be in love Clay, how could he not feel tingly every time Clay laughs or every time Clay jokingly flirts with him, or gives him stupid flowers that he can't even tell the colour of on the Minecraft server.

George really didn't think he was in that deep until Wilbur had sent him a message reading:

Clay has a boyfriend???? seen him with a guy going into his flat . Sorry :((

And all George had felt was numb. Or he'd felt numb for all of about twenty minutes until he'd felt his eyes well up and then George had been near panic hitting call on Nick's contact name only to learn, *no* , Clay doesn't have a boyfriend, just meaningless hook-ups which George isn't even sure if that hurts him more or not.

And then, *then* , Nick had hit him with the bombshell of all bombshells. Letting it slip that all the guys Clay had been bringing back looked suspiciously like him.

Okay, so that's weird, George had thought. Because why the hell would Clay be sleeping with guys who looked like him. Sure, they flirt a lot. But that was like, their *thing* . Clay couldn't actually have feelings for George. Surely he would have said something if he did, George had reasoned to himself, because it's not as if the Brit makes his obvious simping of Clay a secret.

George literally calls Clay 'step-dream' when they're playing Minecraft together and if that isn't modern day code for 'I want you to blow my back out' he doesn't know what is. And George refuses to believe Clay is that obtuse.

George's suspicions are confirmed tonight, when Clay spends half the time they're out with Nick and Darryl checking out a guy at the bar. And yeah, the guy looks like George, but whatever, it's just a coincidence.

That's why he's so confused when Nick says he knows the guy, *and* knows that he's dating a girl. It still hurts when Clay looks so disappointed to find this out, and George decides he's had enough of pretending to be happy around his friends for the night.

"I think I'm going to head home guys, jetlag and all that." George speaks up, for what feels like the first time that night.

"You sure?" Darryl replies, smiling gently at George.

"Yeah," George shrugs back, "It was nice seeing you all though, sorry for being a bit of a downer."

George sees Nick open his mouth as if to say something, then closing it and then changing his mind a final time and speaking, "Why doesn't Clay walk you back to ours? Don't you both have that group project to work on tomorrow?"

George stops in his tracks of pushing his seat back, standing just behind Clay's chair, who also looks a bit frozen on the spot.

"Um, yeah, but I don't wanna impose," George rambles, because what is Nick trying to *do* here, "I can just walk over to yours tomorrow."

"No," Nick butts in before Clay can even offer his thoughts, "I've missed waking up to you on our sofa. Please?"

George hesitates a little, because Nick is trying to play Cupid here and George doesn't even know if Clay is a willing participant of the game.

"Good idea," Clay's voice cuts through George's internal panic, "Means we can start early."

"Yes! Yes," Nick says, hands clapping together, "Exactly. I'm sure I won't be back till quite late as

well."

George doesn't miss the over exaggerated wink Nick sends their way as him and Clay slide on their jackets and chuck a few notes on the table to pay for their drinks.

They both say their byes too quickly for George to work out what his game plan for being alone with Clay is and before he knows it Clay is holding the door open for him and sliding out into the cool late evening air.

"Hey," Clay speaks, sounding uncharacteristically nervous, "Sorry if you didn't actually want to come back to the apartment, I just thought I'd agree with Nick as an excuse for me to be able to leave as well."

"No, it's fine really," George smiles back, eyes briefly leaving the dark pavement in front of them to reach Clay's stupidly beautiful eyes, "Better for my bank account anyway, walking to yours instead of getting an Uber to mine."

Clay wheezes out a laugh, and George is once again reminded how infatuated with the American he is, "Oh, I see how it is, you just want me for my close apartment, absolutely nothing to do with wanting to spend time with me!"

George can't help the blush that paints his cheeks as he giggles back, "No, no, it's just a two for one package. I get to save money and I get to spend time with you, it's a win-win, Clay."

Clay smiles back, and now George is pretty sure his own rosy cheeks are evident as Clay gazes down at him.

And, *fuck*, George is so in love. The street lamps behind Clay are lighting him up in a way that makes his blonde waves seem to glow, and really George had known he was going to have a hard time keeping his pining in check tonight when he saw Clay walk into the bar dressed in black slacks with a tight black shirt tucked in, and a few chains dangling around his neck. Clay had really taken the e-boy movement and ran with it, *not* that George was complaining.

"You okay? You've been kind of quiet all night." Clay murmurs, concern tinting his eyes.

George shrugs, because really he isn't okay, he's tired of wishing he could hold Clay's hand as they walk to class together, he's tired of wishing he woke up in Clay's bed instead of his and Nick's frankly lumpy sofa, he's tired of pretending friendship is *enough* for him.

"Gogy?" Clay inquires again, when it's been a few minutes and George still hasn't decided if he's going to lie or not.

"Sorry, sorry," George replies, a bit flustered under Clay's gaze, "I'm just really fucking tired."

It's only a half lie, George decides, he *is* very physically tired. Mentally too, but that's beyond the point.

Clay coos, and it should be condescending but Clay is the nicest person George knows and all it seems is genuine, "Lucky for you we've just reached my place."

George looks away from Clay's face, and sure enough he's greeted with Clay and Nick's front door that Clay's already got open and is holding in place for George to walk through. George nods his head in thanks, toeing off his shoes and sighing as he hears Clay close and lock the door.

"I'll get your blankets from the cupboard and then just head to my room, let you get some sleep."

Clay speaks, still looking slightly worried for George.

Maybe that's why George says what he says next, or maybe it's because he's felt off kilter all day, like an exposed wire, too sensitive and too sad, "No, I-, stay with me? Just for a bit? We can watch something. Or. I don't know."

George hates being vulnerable, he hates that Clay now looks even *more* concerned for him, but what he hates most is that Clay drops his hand onto George's shoulder and rubs what should be a soothing pattern into it. Instead it just makes George feel even more sad for everything he could have with Clay but doesn't.

"Of course, George." Clay's American drawl says, lifting his hand off George's shoulder to rest on the small of George's back to guide him into the living room and *really*, this just isn't fair now.

"Thanks." George replies, sinking into the sofa and taking the blanket that Clay is holding out for him and wrapping it around himself.

"No problem, you know I'd do anything for you." Clay replies as he sits down next to George, their thighs just barely touching.

George lets out a small yawn, snuggling down more into the blanket as Clay picks up the remote and flicks through Netflix, eventually deciding on some old episodes of Breaking Bad. George knows the show is mostly going to end up as background noise, because he really *is* tired, even if George knows the thoughts buzzing around in his head are going to be too loud to let him sleep.

"You know you can tell me anything that's wrong, George, I hate seeing you upset."

George wants to cry. He wants to start crying and never stop, how *dare* Clay say he hates to see George upset as if he isn't the reason he's upset. Not that Clay is aware he's the reason, but George still feels weirdly betrayed by his best friend. How can Clay not *know* that George is hopelessly in love with him and his dumb perfect smile, and the way he can tower over George when he wants to, and the way he's always the first to notice when George seems off.

George wants to be embarrassed when he actually does feel a tear slip down his cheek, but he's so, *so*, tired.

"Oh, George." Clay breathes out, carefully putting his arm over George's shoulder and pulling him into the taller's chest.

"Sorry." George snuffles, misery coating his voice as he allows himself to push his face into the warm space between Clay's broad shoulder and neck.

Clay just murmurs a soft shushing noise and brings his ring clad hand up to George's hair to run through it, and George knows it's meant to be comforting and make him feel better but all it does is make him cry harder.

"What's wrong?" Clay speaks, and he sounds a bit panicked, "What can I do?"

George doesn't even know what Clay can do. Be in love with him, his dumb brain supplies, "Nothing, you're the one who should be sad anyway."

George feels Clay's chest rise in a small intake of air from where George's hand is gripping onto the younger's t-shirt, "Why would I be sad?"

"Because you didn't get to hook up with that guy at the bar."

“Okay?” Clay replies, confusion lacing his tone and George hates so much that Clay doesn’t understand, “I don’t care about him, George, I’d rather be here with you.”

George wants to be angry, he wants to be so annoyed at the confusing mixed signals Clay is sending him, but he’s just too *tired* .

“Then why don’t you like me back?” George near whines, past any form of embarrassment.

“What?” Clay breathes, pushing George off his chest so they’re sat facing each other on the sofa, George’s red rimmed but now dry eyes staring back at Clay’s filled with disbelief.

“If you’d rather be here with me and not out shagging randoms, then *why* don’t you like me back the way I like you?” George speaks, eyes not leaving Clay’s even though he feels more vulnerable and exposed than he has in his entire life.

“George?” Clay says, a small smile growing on his face, “ *You like me* ? As in, romantically, not in the way we both like Nick or Darryl.”

“Yes Clay, for fucks sake, I make it so obvious and that’s why it sucks so much that you don’t like me too.”

“I thought you were joking, George, you weren’t joking?” Clay speaks, and he’s grinning now which really George thinks is just rude if this is some sick way to let him down nicely.

“Obviously not.” George deadpans.

“Well nor was I, I really fucking like you, Georgie.”

And now George is the one staring at Clay confused and feeling speechless for the first time in his life.

“You do?”

Clay’s laughing now, happiness dancing in his eyes, “Yes, oh my god yes, so much.”

“Oh.” George replies, because this was *not* how he saw his night going when he agreed to go out for drinks.

“I’m gonna kiss you now, that okay?”

George nods dumbly in reply, personally he can’t think of anything more okay than Clay kissing him.

Clay’s bringing a hand up to cup George’s jaw and rubbing his thumb gently along his cheekbone and George is going to die even before Clay’s lips have touched him. When they do, it feels as if every stereotype of fireworks and tingles and just *knowing* are true. George has his arms wrapped around Clay’s shoulders and his tongue gently playing along with Clay’s and he’s never been happier.

The kiss ends too soon, but maybe this is because George has decided any time not spent kissing Clay is wasted time. But Clay’s face is still near Georges and he has a smile firmly fixed in place, his tongue running along his bottom lip and, fuck.

“You’re so hot.” George breathes, because fucking hell, it should be illegal for Clay to look like that.

“Yeah?” Clay mumbles, and his voice is deeper than usual and this is better than anything George had ever dreamed about and they’ve done nothing more than kiss.

George nods before pushing his head forward and tilting till he catches Clay’s lips again, letting a breathy moan slip as Clay’s hand trails up from his cheek to tug lightly on George’s hair. When they pull apart this time, Clay looks just as wrecked as George feels.

“Bed?” George speaks, trying to convey his desperation through a single word.

Clay chuckles, “Definitely.”

**

The fourth time Nick knows it’s the actual George in Clay’s room. He’s not even surprised when he tumbles into their flat just past three in the morning, now on the wrong side of drunk, and sees that the couch is empty and Clay’s bedroom door is firmly shut.

When Nick finally drags himself out of his room the next day, walking into the living room and groaning at the bright lights, he has his suspicions confirmed. Clay and George are sat on the sofa, controllers in hand and what seems to be a very competitive game of Mario Kart going down.

Nick doesn’t even *have* anymore suspensions when he sees the smattering of dark bruises covering George’s neck, and come on, are they fourteen, and Clay’s too big for George hoodie on the older. Nick’s happy for them, he really is.

“Hey, Sappy.” George smiles, and he looks so content that Nick may be sick. If he weren’t so happy for his best friends, that is.

“George.” Nick nods in acknowledgement before getting a glass of water from the kitchen to wash away the stale taste in his mouth and joining his friends back in the living room.

“No more George replacements needed now, Clay?” Nick mutters, cracking a grin as Clay has the decency to look embarrassed.

“No,” Clay replies, rubbing the back of his neck as George laughs, “Nothing compares to the real one anyway.”

Nick *does* gag this time, especially when he hears George aww and press a kiss to Clay’s blushing face.

“And with that, I’m going back to bed. No sex on the couch please.” Nick groans.

“No promises!” Clay laughs.

Nick swears he’s happy for them.

End Notes

hope u enjoyed!! comments n kudos are.. mwah,, chefs kiss

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